

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

FEA-01 /067 W

----- 020107

R 241510Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8619

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POUCHED TO ALL CONSULS IN CANADA

REF A) OTTAWA 4767 B) OTTAWA 4467

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO RELIABLE GOC SOURCE, COMMONS WILL RECONVENE JAN 26 AND PROBABLY RUN TO END OF JUNE WHEN START OF SUMMER RECESS LIKELY. GOVERNMENT WANTS TO DEFER NEW SESSION AND THRONE SPEECH UNTIL NEXT FALL IN ORDER TO AVOID INTERFERING WITH CURRENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. TIME/READERS DIGEST LEGISLATION WILL BE TAKEN UP BY EARLY FEB AND EXTENDED DEBATE LIKELY BUT MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE UNLIKELY IN VIEW OF SOLID GOVERNMENT MAJORITY. VARIETY OF BILLS OF LESSER IMPORTANCE ALSO STILL PENDING. MAJOR NEW MEASURES EXPECTED BEFORE JUNE INCLUDE PEACE AND SECURITY (READ: LAW AND ORDER) PACKAGE, LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT GOVERNMENT SPENDING CUTS, NEW BUDGET MESSAGE, AND ENERGY LEGISLATION. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLWOING INFORMATION RE CONTINUATION SESSION OF PARLIAMENT RECEIVED BY EMBOFF FROM YANOVER, PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANT TO PRIVY COUNCIL PRESIDENT MITCHELL SHARP. YANOVER IS RELIABLE AND PLUGGED-IN PARLIAMENTARY SOURCE BUT OBVIOUSLY SOME OF HIS ESTIMATES QUALIFIED BY UNPREDICTABILITY OF MANEUVERING AT SESSION ONCE IT GETS UNDER WAY.

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EM COMMONS SESSION WILL START ON JAN 26 AND WILL RUN TO

END OF JUNE WHEN IT LIKELY THERE WILL BE ADJOURNMENT FOR SUMMER RECESS. THRONE SPEECH AND COMMENCEMENT OF NEW SESSION WILL BE IN SEPTEMBER. YANOVER EXPLAINED GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT NEW SESSION AND THRONE SPEECH NOW BECAUSE OF CRODED LEGISLATIVE DOCKET AND NECESSITY OF SEVERAL WEEKS DEBATE ON THRONE SPEECH. THERE ADDED FACTOR THAT NEW SESSION ESSENTIALLY WIPES LEGISLATIVE SLATE CLEAN AND PENDING LEGISLATION SUCH AS TIME/READERS DIGEST BILL PRESUMABLY WOULD BE AFFECTED.

4. YANOVER EXPECTS THAT TIME/READERS DIGEST BILL (C-58) WILL BE RAISED FOR CONSIDERATION WITHIN TWO WEEKS AFTER COMMONS RECONVENES. IT NOW IN SO-CALLED REPORT STAGE WHERE AMENDMENTS AND DEBATE PERMITTED. ELEVEN AMENDMENTS NOW PENDING. MAIN THRUST OF THESE IS TO POSTPONE EFFECTIVE DATE OF ACT TO JAN 1, 1977 AND TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC CONTENT WORDING AS LOW AS 40 PERCENT IN THE LEGISLATION. (EMBASSY COMMENT: 80 PERCENT CONTENT RULE-- SO-CALLED CULLEN RULE-- NOW MERELY INTERPRETIVE RULING AND NOT IN LEGISLATION ITSELF.) YANOVER EXPECTS A "FAIR AMOUNT OF DEBATE" AT THIS STAGE AND AGREED THAT GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE TO INVOKE CLOSURE. MORE DEBATE EXPECTED AT NEXT LEGISLATIVE STAGE (THRID READING) WHEN DEBATE BUTNOT AMENDMENTS PERMITTED. AGAIN, GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE TO INVOKE CLOSURE. BILL WILL THEN GO TO SENATE WHICH GOES THROUGH ESSENTIALLY SAME PROCESS AS IN COMMONS AND WHICH LIKELY TO HOLD COMMITTEE HEARINGS. (EMBASSY COMMENT: WITH THIS RATHER TABGLED LEGISLATIVE WEB, ACCURATE TIMEING PREDICTIONS OBVIOUSLY VERY DIFFICULT, BUT GIVEN GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO BILL C-58, EMBASSY HAS LITTLE REASON TO DUBT THAT LEGISLATION WILL EVENTUALLY PASS LARGELY OR ENTIRELY INTACT.)

5. OTHER PENDING LEGISLATION AS FOLLOWS. BILL C-20 WHICH AMENDS 1947 CITIZENSHIP ACT BY INTER ALIA, REDUCING WAITING PERIOD FOR CITIZENSHIP AND ABOLISHING SO-CALLED BRITISH PREFERENCE. YANOVER DOESN'T EXPECT MUCH DEBATE ON THIS. BILL C-71 WITH VARIETY OF AMENDMENTS TO CRIMINAL CODE, PRINCIPALLY SO-CALLED MORGENTHAU LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TALER AMENDMENT PREVENTING APPELLATE COURT REVERSAL OF JURY ACQUITTAL OF DEFENDENT AS IN MORGENTHAU CASE. BILL C-61 INTRODUCING NEW MARITIME CODE AND WHICH NOW STILL IN COMMITTEE. (EMBASSY COMMENT: BILL C-61 HAS BEEN LIMPING THROUGH LEGISLATIVE PROCESS FOR 2 1/2 YEARS WITHOUT ATTRACTING GREAT INTEREST. EMBASSY'S A-566, 10/31/73, RECOMMENDED THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES REVIEW LEGISLATION IN TERMS OF U.S. INTERSTS.)

6. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO INTRODUCE SEVERAL PIECES OF NEW LEGISLATION BEFORE PARLIAMENT ADJOURNS FOR SUMMER RECESS. YANOVER EXPECTS "PEACE AND SECURITY" PACKAGE (REF B) WILL BE INTRODUCED AROUND MID-FEBRUARY. AS INDICATED IN REF B, THIS PROMISES REAL FIREWORKS BECAUSE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ELEMENT BUT HARD TO PREDICT EXTENT TO WHICH THIS WILL DAMAGE GOVERNMENT SINCE IT MORE VISCERAL THAN PARTISAN ISSUE.

7. YANOVER SAID THAT OTHER SIGNIFICANT, NEW LEGISLATION WILL BE IN ECONOMIC AND ENERGY FIELDS. REGARDING FORMER, THERE WILL BE A NEW BUDGET MESSAGE IN THE SPRING. IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT SOME ELEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY PACKAGE (RE A). THE GOVERNMENT WILL, FOR EXAMPLE, ATTEMPT TO REPEAL THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS ACT WHICH PROVIDES FOR INEFFECTIVE (IN GOVERNMENT VIEW) REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.

IM YANOVER WAS VAGUE ON ELEMENTS OF NEW ENERGY LEGISLATION PROBABLY BECAUSE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET HONED ITS OWN THINKING ON THE MATTER. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO DEVELOP WITH FURTHER LEGISLATION THE ENERGY POLICY PUT TOGETHER IN SUCH HASTE IN THE 1973/74 SESSION. (EMBASSY COMMENT: ENERGY MINISTER GILLESPIE HAS INDICATED THAT A PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS ACT WILL BE INTRODUCED EARLY IN THE CONTINUED SESSION. LEGISLATION IS TO CLARIFY INDUSTRY'S TERMS OF ACCESS TO FEDERAL LANDS IN NORTH FOR PURPOSES OF ENCOURAGING EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT THERE, TO ENSURE TANGIBLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR NORTHER RESIDENTS, AND TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.

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LEGISLATION IS ALSO EXPECTED TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO PETRO-CANADA'S ROLE IN FRONTIER OIL AND GAS RESOURCES. PETRO-CANADA'S PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE, MAURICE STRONG, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, BELIEVES THAT NEW NATIONAL OIL COMPANY SHOULD HAVE PREFERENTIAL ACCESS TO CROWN LANDS.

OM COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY, REMAINDER OF THIS SESSION IS GOING TO BE ACTIVE LEGISLATIVELY. IN VIEW OF CONTROVERSY ALREADY SURROUNDING SOME GOVERNMENT MEASURES, I.E., THE TIME/READERS DIGEST BILL AND THE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ISSUE, DEBATE IS GOING TO BE PARTICULARLY HOT AND MEDIA ATTENTION SHOULD BE FREQUENTLY CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT. BUT, OF COURSE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE VOTES (EXCEPT PERHAPS ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WHICH LIKELY TO BE

CONSCIENCE VOTE) AND ANY SIGNIFICANT REVERSAL HIGHLY UN-
LIKELY. MOST OPPOSITION CAN HOPE FOR, CONSEQUENTLY, IS
SCORING GOOD MEASURE OF DEBATING POINTS, RECEIVING FAVOR-
ABLE MEDIA ATTENTION , AND PERHAPS EXTENDING THE SESSION
INTO THE SUMMER AS HAPPENED LAST YEAR.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, LEGISLATIVE BILLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OTTAWA00300
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760028-0654
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760125/aaaaavph.tel
Line Count: 175
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 OTTAWA 4767, 76 OTTAWA 4467
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006